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Francis P. Jones, Editor

Wallace C. Merwin, Executive Secretary

## TIENT FENG NEWS

Another batch of Tien Feng magazines has been received here, almost a complete file from June 2 to November 3, 1958. It will take some time to digest and report all the news in these magazines, but in the meantime a general over-all report on the contents is in order.

The denunciation of rightists continues throughout the country. For example, a political study institute in Nanking for Kiangsu province enrolled 240 church workers and 96 seminary students, and continued in session from February 2 to May 13, and during that session they condemned as rightists the following church personnel of Kiangsu: Luther Shao, Disciples, Nanking; Yang Ching-ch'iu, Soochow; Chang Ching-i, Methodist, Wusih; Ts'ang An-t'ang, Nanking Theological Seminary; Wang Yang, Nanking; Tu Ts'ung-yeh, Wusih; Ying En-chao, Kiangying; Hsu En-tz'u, Nanking; Chuang Hsien-su, Muiyang; Hsiung Mei-t'u, Pinhai.

However, the general object of denunciation has for the most part shifted to "Illegal activities" within the church, meaning something different from rightist views. The details of the "crimes" seem to be faith healing, independent preachers (preachers without a congregation or church of their own), preaching of the second coming, and the holding of church meetings in private homes. There has been a widespread attack on the True Jesus Church for its emphasis on faith healing and the exorcism of demons, with practically all their churches and elders in the Hankow and Shanghai regions coming under suspicion. In Shantung it is the Spiritual Grace (Ling-en) churches which are condemned for this activity in an article by Episcopal Bishop Wang Shen-ying. A very stern view is taken of these "irregularities", with the charge freely made that this emphasis upon faith healing has caused the death of many of the deluded believers who refused to see a physician or take medicine.

The news of greatest importance in this period is the complete scrapping of the whole denominational system of Protestantism and its replacement by a Chinese Christian Church, the governing officers of which are the Three Self Committees on the national, provincial and local levels. This process was apparently not complete by the November 3 issue of Tien Feng, nor was it being conducted in a systematic way by merging the national leadership of the various denominations. Instead, each city was taking the initiative for itself in the unifying of the churches within its borders, and the result undoubtedly will be considerable variation from place to place in the details of organization, ritual and church life.

In August the 65 churches of Peking were merged into four churches, one each in the north, south, east and west sides of the city. This is described in two articles, one by Lu Wen and one by Hsueh Kuan-yi, sister of Cheng Ching-yi and Andrew Cheng. The former justifies this drastic reduction in the number of churches by saying that of these 65 churches, more than 10 did

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not have a single member, 20 more had a membership of under 20 each, and 20 more were controlled by rightists and other "evil elements." He goes on to say that the total Sunday attendance at church in all these churches of Peking was under 500. It will be recalled that this is less than Wang Ming-tao's congregation alone before he was imprisoned.

This merger of course released a large number of preachers, Bible women and theological students for participation in the Great Leap Forward in economic production, and Lu Wen states that 150 of these from Peking were assigned to labor in a farm commune. As to the church property vacated by this wholesale merging, Cheng Kuan-yi states that it was all turned over to the Government for public use.

This action in Peking was followed the next month, in September, by similar action in Shanghai, where its 200 churches were merged into some 12 or 15 churches. None of the articles identifies the churches kept open, so the only one we know definitely to be still open is the Community Church, and since one of the former pastors at Moore Memorial Church, Huang P'ei-yung, has been transferred to Community Church, it raises the question whether Moore Memorial is one of the casualties.

Other reports tell of the same process going on in other cities - Tientsin, Wenchow, Taiyuan, etc. One short article tells of the unifying of the Anglican and the CIM churches in Tali, Yunnan. This was all done through the local committee of the Three Self Movement. The representatives of each denomination on that committee took the responsibility of surrendering to the Three Self Committee all their property and church program, and then of voting themselves out of existence. There is no indication that any of them felt the necessity of referring the question to their national denomination authorities.

The only indications so far of the merging having gone beyond the local city level were in Chekiang and in Kwangsi. In Chekiang it is reported that the provincial offices in Hangchow for the Church of Christ in China, the Episcopal diocese and the Baptist Church of Chekiang and Shanghai were merged into one, and in Kwangsi a meeting of the Three Self Provincial Committee formally declared all the churches of the province to be united into one.

This union includes everything that can be called Protestant. The Sheng Kung Hui (Anglican) is a full participant, with no question apparently raised anywhere about the validity of the ministry. The Seventh Day Adventists are included, and will be expected to worship with other Christians, presumably on Sunday. The Apostolic Faith churches, and others of an exclusive nature, who in the past have refused "to have any dealings with the Samaritans", are all included. Indigenous churches, such as the Little Flock and the True Jesus Church, who have been among the most uncooperative in the past, are also in.

How the problems of unification were taken care of can perhaps be shown most simply by translating the articles of union of the Taiyuan churches. They are as follows:

There shall be unified worship for the city of Taiyuan, and a ministerial staff of three or four. All fellow-workers besides these and those assigned to the Three Self office shall throw themselves into the Socialist construction of our mother country; those who are older or physically weak shall retire. All real and movable church property and all church funds shall be turned over to the Three Self Patriotic Committee.

Church Organization: 1. All former governing committees and boards of the various churches are hereby abolished, and the administration of the church shall be in the hands of the Three Self Patriotic Committee.

2. Regarding ritual, regulations and church order:

- (1) There shall be a unified worship program, and each church shall surrender its own individual ritual.
- (2) The hymns used in worship shall be unified, and a committee shall choose and edit the hymns for use.
- (3) All books used in the interpretation of the Bible shall be examined and judged, and those containing poisonous thoughts shall be rejected. Only teachings favoring union and socialism shall be used. In particular, any material coming from outside shall



be carefully examined before being accepted.

- (4) There shall be no more preaching about the Last Day, or about the vanity of this world. This is negative and pessimistic teaching. Instead we shall emphasize the need for the union of faith and practice, the dignity of labor, the control of nature, and the dividing line between ourselves and our enemies, between right and wrong.
- (5) Belief and unbelief shall not be made an issue in determining marriage questions.

3. In regard to the necessary reform of each church:

- (1) The Little Flock shall abolish its women's meetings, its weekly breaking of bread, its personal interviews with members before the breaking of bread, and its rule against women speaking in the church.
- (2) The Salvation Army shall give up all its military regulations.
- (3) The Seventh Day Adventists shall abolish their daily morning prayers. On the Sabbath they shall participate in beneficial good works and economic production. Their tithe system for the support of the clergy shall be abolished and also their unification of accounts for Shansi province.
- (4) All the YMCA secretaries shall be assigned to productive labor, and the closing of the Taiyuan YMCA as a separate organization shall be carefully considered.

It will be seen from the above that the demand for a more complete mobilization of all available resources for the Great Leap Forward in industrial production is one of the driving forces in this unification movement. A very considerable amount of property, and a large proportion of church personnel has been released from church use and made available to the State in its ruthless and all-absorbing drive for industrial power. But another constantly recurring note is that the denominational organization is the last vestige of the imperialism and semi-colonialism that has characterized the church in the past. Again and again it is pointed out that that organization was the means devised by the missionaries by which they could "divide and rule" the church, that it is therefore an evil thing of which the church must divest itself.

One of the constant emphases throughout the past year has been the necessity of every Chinese citizen "surrendering his heart" to the Communist Party. By this is meant a complete confession of all his thoughts and feelings, in particular those in which a criticism of Communist policy is involved. Everyone must submit, and in the June 30 Tien Feng four pages are given to Y. T. Wu's confessional article. This is an important statement, and I hope later to get it translated. In the meantime I can say that it traces the course of his thought during the past thirty years, showing how he came to believe that the Communist Party was China's only salvation. He contends that Communist atheism is no real threat to Christianity, using for this a modification of Gamaliel's argument - if Christianity is true, the Communist atheism will not be able to prevail against it, and if it is not true, it doesn't make any difference what happens. His final paragraph is very revealing, it indicates that he is more uncertain about the future than the main body of his article would imply. He says:

"In the above I have shown how during the past 30 years I have come to a recognition of the Communist Party. I believe that I have a certain recognition of the Party, but I do not venture to say that I have become one with it in heart and soul. Capitalist and individualist thinking still persists in my mind, and in regard to the life of socialism I still feel a certain strangeness, or even opposition. In the Great Leap Forward, I realize that I have fallen behind, I have not kept up with the times, and consequently feel that other people are moving too fast. I must thoroughly reform myself, and stretch every nerve to press forward. I must come closer to the Party, have more confidence in it, and with the people of the whole country work to create the miracle of socialist construction."

This may be just the typical note of humility which every citizen is supposed to strike in the presence of the Communist Party, but it seems to me to go beyond that and show that Y. T. Wu is genuinely uneasy over recent developments in the relations between the church and the government.

It is perhaps significant that the individual church news, which used to fill the last few pages of each issue, has now been dropped out completely. Instead, the space is filled with propaganda or argumentative articles. One subject about which a number of articles appeared was on the question, "To what social class do preachers belong?" Some of the articles maintained out-



right that preachers belong to the exploiting class, and that they live as parasites on the labor of others. Other articles protested this view, and claimed that preachers performed a useful service, like school teachers. Coming as it does at a time when so many churches are being closed and preachers assigned to the ranks of labor, it is evident that the series is intended as a justification of that drastic action.

#### POEMS BY WANG WEI

Chang Yin-nan and Lewis C. Walmsley have translated 136 of Wang Wei's (701-761 A.D.) poems into English (Charles E. Tuttle Company, Rutland, Vermont, 1958, \$3.00). This Tang Dynasty poet is said in the Introduction to rank with Tu Fu and Li Po, and at least those with a China background will find them interesting. Taoist ideas are mirrored in many of them, as in the following quotations:

"In middle life I became immersed in the philosophy of Tao;  
Later I went to live at the foot of South Mountain...  
When I am happy I walk alone in the hills.  
I know within my heart what is good and which is beautiful."

"Ah, who can restore white hair to black!  
Gold cannot be made by alchemy.  
Do you seek a cure for the disease of old age?  
Learn then the Doctrine of Quietism - there is the only remedy."

#### MISSIONARY NEWS

Rev. A. W. Lohead, former Canadian missionary in Honan, died recently.

A letter from England reports that the China Inland Mission agency there is calling a special public meeting for prayer for China on January 21.

It is reported that Miss Helen Willis, who has kept her book shop in Shanghai open through all these difficult years, has been under house arrest and had to undergo days and days of interrogation. She is now free again, but the shop has been closed.

#### CHURCH NEWS

According to a Hong Kong report (RNS 12/26/58) Chinese Catholic bishops, priests and nuns are now obliged to undertake productive labor. Sister Superior Suen Tsong-yi of Sienhsien wrote an enthusiastic account of her experiences. She said that they were all "taking part in labor in the fields - from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. At midday we take our meals in turns so as not to interrupt work. When wells are being dug supper is passed over and work continues on empty stomachs until 9:30 p.m. At harvest time, we naturally clear our own fields. But in the spirit of charity, we also help to harvest the fields of the co-operative. We rise at 3 a.m. and then after Mass set out to work. During the dry season we irrigate fields. As we turn the handles of the pumps we sing songs such as 'The New Way' and 'The Lighthouse'. During rest hours we study the writings of Liu Shao-chi. Of course we no longer wear our religious habits. On our heads we wear a white bowl-shaped coif, just big enough to cover our short hair."

A former British missionary in China has recently received a letter from a Chinese friend in Central China. In it the latter said, "Our country is a land of surprises. We do not know what will happen next year. I believe this is God's world, and that He rules and directs all movements for the fulfillment of His divine purposes. Fundamentally we all belong to one family. Give my Christmas greetings to all my friends in England."

It is reported from Shanghai that in August all the people were divided into four classes, two good and two bad. The two good ones are workers and farmers, the two bad ones are those who work for themselves and make money, and those who live on the work of others. Church workers are put in the last class.

A report from Wuhan states that in Hankow the only church left open is the Griffith John Church, and in Wuchang the only church left is the Swedish Church. This would be in line with the reports from Tien Feng as given above.

The People's Daily of Peking for September 13 answered a number of questions about the problems of running public mess halls. One question was, Since members do not cook food for themselves at home, how can they have a heated kang on which to sleep? This was a poser. The Daily replied by saying that they hoped the cooperatives or communes would be able to supply some fuel to individual households, either crop stalks or wood or coal, but if there was not enough to go around, then several households might have to sleep together on the same kang.